

KASHGAR

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to 105°. Another climatic feature arising from "continentality" is the fact that April is much hotter than October, which is the warmer month in other regions of the globe. 132

In winter the ground freezes to a depth of a foot and a half, and all irrigation water stops owing to the choking of the canals with ice between 15th November and the end of February. Yet the Kashgar winter is not at all a formidable affair. The skies indeed are sometimes grey with dust-haze, and for several days in January the thermometer does not rise above freezing-point. But the sun shines most of the time, while as for wind, that terror of cold lands, we had none worth mentioning. Ringed round on three sides by lofty ranges, Kashgar is mercifully windless in winter, so that in spite of the hard and prolonged frost the cold is not severe. We made ourselves very cosy in the evenings in front of roaring wood fires. One of the first things we did to the Consulate was to instal good British open fireplaces, not being content with the cheerless Russian stoves we found in the house: vast shiny black cylinders like the funnels of monstrous locomotives, which disfigured and either under- or over-heated every room. There are usually one or two light snowfalls during the winter, but the snow melts very quickly in the strong sun, except where there is underlying ice. In spring and early summer occasional storms with rain or dust or both vary the monotony of the eternal sunshine, and are also to be welcomed for the exquisite clearness of the air which follows them. At any time in July or August the weather may become, for short spells at a time, unpleasantly warm according to European though not to Indian standards; punkahs are unknown, though I must confess I should sometimes have been glad of one. But the nights are seldom oppressively hot, except occasionally just before a storm. Another fly—to use an appropriate metaphor—in the ointment of a Kashgar summer is the insect life. Mosquitoes and sand-flies are a trial, though not to be compared with those of an Indian plains station; the former are smaller and less robust than those of Hindustan, and both can be effectively circumvented by a mixture of citronella oil and kerosene. At night muslin sand-fly curtains are advisable, unless one is sleeping in the open air and well away from walls. 136

One would have expected that the cities of Chinese Turkestan, where ideas regarding sanitation and hygiene are of the most primitive, would be hotbeds of disease and regularly 164 364.

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swept by all sorts of epidemics. In particular it might be supposed that towns which are dependent for their water-supply upon small rivers, canals and even ponds would be peculiarly liable to the scourge of cholera, as are those of Eastern Persia and Afghanistan where similar conditions prevail. But it is a remarkable fact that cholera, typhus and plague are alike unknown, though they appear regularly in Ferghana and Bokhara immediately to the west. Stranger still, though dogs both tame and semi-wild abound, and though they occasionally go mad and bite people, hydrophobia is unheard of, though common enough on the Russian side of the Tien Shan. The only serious infectious diseases are typhoid and smallpox, which appear to be endemic; in neither case, however, is the mortality rate high, in spite of the lack of western-trained doctors and hospitals, nor have Europeans much to fear from them. The only ailment which seems to give Europeans much trouble is a comparatively mild form of malaria which is prevalent in the districts where there is much rice-cultivation. On the whole, Kashgaria may be said to be one of the healthiest countries in Asia. So, at any rate, we found it, for with the exception of a single chill which kept D. in bed for a week or two our first September neither of us had a day's illness during the whole of our time in Chinese Turkistan.

/The Chinese/

N knowledge of sanitation and elementary health regulations. Their
*563 concepts of health and disease rest mainly on the traditional beliefs.
751 The concept that dominates most of their thinking about the human
[772] body and its health is that of the Two Principles of yang and yin.
S These are philosophical concepts of the origin of all things. The
563 yang principle represents the male and the yin represents the
751 female. They stand for opposite poles - heaven and earth, sun
[772] and moon, day and night, heat and cold, life and death, positive
and negative, strong and weak.

N In medicine, everything is classified as yang or yin. The
*563 exterior of the body - the skin - is yang, while the interior is
753 yin. The back is yang, while the abdomen is yin. The heart and
772 liver are yang while the spleen, lungs and kidneys are yin. A
826 disease, accordingly, is yang when due to external causes and yin
S when due to internal causes. Respiratory diseases, fever, and
563 diseases affecting the upper part of the body are yang diseases.
753 Chills and afflictions of the lower body, and circulatory diseases
772 are yin diseases. When the yin predominates, one suffers from
826 yang disease; when the yang is in excess yin results.

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[278] The two principles must be kept in mind when treating the disease, since
the drugs and herbs are also divided into these two classes.

N Another Chinese concept concerning health is that of the exist-
*563 tence of the Five Elements - metal, wood, water, fire and earth.
751 According to this belief, the human body is composed of a mixture
753 of the five elements. So long as the proportions of these five
772 elements remain in order, health results. If the balance is dis-
S turbed, disease follows.

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[184] These beliefs are common mainly among the uneducated popu-
lation, the rural and the lower classes of the urban population.
S In most cases, the higher classes have a Western knowledge of
753 the basic elements of health and sanitation and know the basic
772 facts of human physiology and the causes of transmission of diseases.
[184] Illiteracy and ignorance is much greater in the Northwest region
S than along the Pacific Coast. Thus, in the Northwest, the beliefs
[212] are widespread and most Western ideas have not penetrated into
the larger part of the population.

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114 Unfortunately, we do not have figures on the birth and death
163 rate in Northwest China. The figures for all of China are given
165 in the chapter on "Health and Sanitation" of the General China
Handbook.

C. Predominant Diseases Among the Chinese

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*563 The most common diseases are the fecal-borne ones. They are
164 spread through the use of human waste as fertilizer. Andre Migot,
364 who travelled through Northwest China in 1946, dwells on this
S problem in his description of a typical middle-sized town in this
563 area (Tibetan Marches, p. 51): "Then there is the problem of sani-
164 tation. The total volume of human excrement produced every day
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/The Chinese/

by half a million people - even if they live mainly on rice - is bound to be formidable. No sewage system of any kind exists; its place is taken by an old established guild of public servants who can be seen every morning in large numbers making their way through the streets. The casks or buckets which dangle from the bamboo poles across their shoulders smell no better than you would expect them to. They are always full to the brim and their contents, which are eventually sold to truck gardens on the outskirts of the city, are a constant threat to the legs of the passers-by.... The buckets in which they carry their night soil down the hill are used, after being briskly rinsed, to carry their water up."

Besides producing a very unpleasant picture, this description brings out the very serious problems connected with the lack of a proper sewage system. It also points out the many possibilities for spreading contagious diseases and infections.

Tuberculosis is quite prevalent in China. Epidemic diseases are common also, such as typhoid and paratyphoid fevers, cholera and smallpox. Malaria and the two kinds of dysenteries, amoebic and bacillary also are present. Death at childbirth, both of infants and mothers, is quite high, because of the lack of adequate sanitary precautions during childbirth and the practices of the midwives, who do nothing to prevent infection of both mother and child.

Winfield in his book states that "seventy-five per cent of all deaths in China are due to preventable diseases that are under control in the West; there are about 15 million deaths each year in China, of which 11,750,000 are due to preventable diseases." (China: The Land and the People, p. 111).

D. Medical Personnel

The lack of Western-trained doctors, nurses, pharmacists and dentists in the Northwest is an extremely serious problem. Most people, because of the shortage of medical personnel, still go to the local herb-doctors. (A full description of the traditional Chinese science of medicine is given in the General Handbook). In many less acute cases, people either neglect to do anything or attempt to treat themselves by unscientific methods.

E. Efforts of the Government

The Nationalist Government was aware of the serious shortage of medical personnel and equipment in all of China, including the Northwest. Two national organizations were established in the 1930's to deal with these problems: The Department of Public Health under the Ministry of the Interior, which had a Northwest-ern Office for the Prevention of Epidemics, and the National Health Department under the National Economic Council, which also had an office in the Northwest.

THE CAPITAL OF SINKIANG

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000 other's sleeve. The Qazaq woman frequently accom-
291 panied her husband, dressed in her best black quilted
coat, and wearing a white cotton headdress swathed
round the chin with a kind of gorget which becomingly
framed the broad tanned face.

• 364 Our excursions round the town led us in every
direction through rough and muddy streets. The
weather was hot and the flies innumerable. This was
a natural consequence of the season, which was that of
the ripe melon, and the habit of the populace which
was to buy a slice, eat the pulp, and then throw the
rind away by the roadside. In some places the mounds
of discarded peel reached to the eaves of the low
houses, while dense swarms of flies buzzed gaily around.

[312] The wells were all flush with the ground, and we were
never allowed to drink water which had been drawn
from them. A wide rapid river flows outside the city,
and is surmounted by an imposing rocky cliff, on
which stands a pagoda. Beyond this are the trees of
the Governor's park, which enclosure contains a life-
sized statue of himself. The character of the masses

536 of the Chinese population is distinctly different from
636 that of the large towns within the Great Wall. These
are colonials, and inevitably differ from the dwellers in
the homeland, even though tenaciously adhering to its
every manner and custom. On arrival, according to
etiquette, a formal call was paid to the Governor's
wife, by whom we were very graciously received.
Governor Yang also came in, sat down with us, and
talked on many subjects. He asked several questions
concerning the journey we had taken, and showed great
interest in the educational work which we had accom-
636 plished in Shansi. The policy of this strong auto-
20 cratic ruler is that of complete segregation of his people
from the turbulent nations which surround them. To